Execution of Justice Worksheet

1. Describe the *stasis* in the play: where, when, who, what, etc. in a paragraph.

This play revolves around Dan White and his trial for the murder of Mayor Moscone and Harvey Milk. It takes play in 1978 in San Francisco. Throughout the play, multiple witnesses are called, and members of the court discuss the case as videos of news reports are shown on a screen.

2. What is the *intrusion*?

I believe White’s murdering the Mayor and Milk would be the thing that propels the action to the end of the play.

3. What is the *unique factor*?

“This is the day that…” White’s trial is held.

4. What is the *dramatic question* that should be answered by the end of the play?

What will White’s sentence be? Will he be put in a maximum security prison for the rest of his life, or will be get a lighter sentence with the option of parole?

5. Provide an illustration of the *two kinds of exposition* that the play has in it.

Known to all: The fact that Milk was openly gay.

Known to one: Harvey Milk knew that White would not get his old position back.

6. Identify the most *theatrical moment* in the play and of what importance it seems to be.

I think the most theatrical moment would have to be at the end of Act I when the court is playing the interview of the police and White. White emotionally explains his reasoning behind his two murders and his efforts to bring about a better society. His speech bring everyone to tears. Probably not the response Norman would have wanted…

7. List some of the *themes* of the play.

- To what extent “justice” is served in the court system

* How lawyers can spin information
* The issue of where fire arms can and should be carried
* The process of the gay rights movement

8. What do the principal characters *want* and what are some *obstacles* that stand in the way of them getting what they want?

The psychologists seem to want the jury to believe White was impossible of premeditated murder because he was depressed, but Norman shows how ridiculous they are being with his questions.

Norman wants to have White convicted of first degree murder, but Schmidt and the jury stand in his way.

Dan White does a good job convincing the jury that he wants to serve his city, but he still has to go through the trial and is sentenced to only seven years and eight months.

9. Describe some possible *images* in the play and how does the *title* help us understand the play.

The judge’s gavel seemed to me like White’s gun shots. They often came without warning, and they were showing when “justice had been passed,” just like White believed he was serving his city when he murdered the Mayor and Milk.

White’s going in the window could be an image for the relative ease with which he could murder two people and get a lenient sentence. Though it was unusual, the defense said it was not out of the ordinary to see people going through that window; similarly, people seemed to not care as much about the murder of a gay man.

This title is brilliant! In this case, both uses of “execution” work here to reveal a different part of the play. We could think of “execution” in the sense of murder - Harvey Milk, the person who fought for justice and gay rights, was killed. Also, “execution” in the sense of carrying out something - the play follows the process of the court deciding how to convict White.

10. Briefly define the *family relationships* that are examined in the play.

Throughout the play, the minor character “Young Mother” talks about how this trial and its outcome will affect her children.

Mrs. White does a good job of making her husband appear sympathetic and stressed. She paints herself as a supportive wife who wants the best for Mr. White.

At the end, a character brings up the point that Mrs. Moscone must also be devastated that her husband has just been murdered - it’s not just Mrs. White that is suffering here.